

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4389
INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 USUN 2177

DEPARTMENT PASS TO INTERIOR (DOTA)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, VQ, US, RQ

SUBJECT COMMITTEE ON 24 (C-24) VISITING MISSION TO THE
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (VI) AND PRECEDING WASHINGTON VISIT

REF: A) USUN 1376; B) USUN 1534

SUMMARY: JUNE 30 AND JULY 1, THE C-24 VISITING MISSION
TRAVELLED TO WASHINGTON AT OUT INVITATION AND MET SEPARATELY
WITH VI CONGRESSMAN DE LUGO, DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS
VAN CLEVE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
TODMAN, AND OFFICIALS OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
SERVICE. AMONG THE QUESTION RAISED AND CONCERNS EXPRESSED
BY THE MISSION WERE THE FOLLOWING:

-- THE PEOPLE OF THE VI ARE NOT AWARE OF THE STATUS
OPTIONS OPEN TO THEM AND DO NOT THINK OF THEMSELVES AS BEING
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A DEPENDENT TERRITORY.

-- THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WILL NOT ADDRESS THE
QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH THE US.

-- VI FINANCIAL DEPENDENCY ON THE US, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

-- OBSTACLES TO THE VI DEVELOPING LINKS WITH ITS
CARIBBEAN NEIGHBORS?.

- NATIVE VIRGIN ISLANDERS CONCERNS THAT
THEY ARE BEING SUBMERGED IN A "SEA" OF CARIBBEAN ALIENS
AND "NATURAL IZED ALIENS" WHO ARE PLACING GREAT BURDENS
ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE TERRITORY AND THREATEN TO
TIP THE POLITICAL BALANCE AGAINST THEM

-VURGIN ISLAND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LAND PURCHASE
POLICIES ON ST. JOHN

-- LAND PURCHASES BY MAINLAND AMERICANS
THIS TELEGRAM HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED IN THE DEPARTMENT, DOTA, INS, OR
WITH CONGRESSMAN DE LUGO. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JUNE 30 AND JULY 1 THE C-24 MISSION WHICH VISITED
THE VI FROM APRIL 23 - MAY 2 (FIJI - VUNIBOBO, TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO - SEALY, MALI - DIAKITE, AND TUNISIA - BACHROUCH
AND THEIR SECRETARIAT ENTOURAGE) VISITED WASHINGTON AND
MET SEPARATELY WITH VI CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DE LUGO,
DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS VAN CLEVE, ASSISTANT SEC-
RETARY MEYNES, ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN AND OFFICIALS
OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, INCLUDING
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ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONERS WACH AND STEWART, GENERAL COUNSEL
CROSLAND, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT LEARY AND CHIEF IMMIGRATION
JUDGE BOOKFORD. MEYNES HOSTED A LUNCH AT THE DEPARTMENT
FOR THE VISITING MISSION. DURING THE SEPARATE MEETINGS
MEMBERS OF THE MISSION RAISED A BROAD RANGE OF QUESTIONS
AND CONCERNS, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH ARE TREATED IN
THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS, WHICH ALSO INCLUDE RESPONSE TO
THEM FROM US OFFICIALS.

2. POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RELA-
TIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

VUNIBOB EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI
DON'T KNOW THEY HAVE ANY CHOICE ABOUT THEIR STATUS, INDEPEN-
DENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVEN-
TION (CONCON) WILL NOT ADDRESS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE VI AND THE US. SEALY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE PEO-
PLE OF THE VI DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE UN CHARTER. DE LUGO
SAID HE SEES NO CHANGE IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US
SINCE THERE IS NO DESIRE FOR ANY SUCH CHANGE. VIRGIN
ISLANDERS ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS AND HAVE DEVELOPED SELF-
GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM IN A

PROCESS IN WHICH THEY HAVE AHCIEVED MOST OF WHAT THEY'VE BEEN SEEKING. THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE VI WANT TO UPGRADE THEIR PRESENT STATUS WITHOUT CHANGING IT SINCE THEY FEEL THE PRESENT SITUATION IS VERY ADVANTAGEOUS. THERE IS NO INTEREST IN STATEHOOD.

3. DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS VAN CLEVE SAID IT IS US POLICY TO PERMIT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI TO MAKE THE JUDGEMENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO BE AND WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT THEY WANT. SHE POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS NO INSTANCE IN WHICH THE VI HAS ADVOCATED A MAJOR STEP FORWARD THAT IT HAS NOT EVENTUALLY BEEN ACCORDED, AND CITED

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MANY SPECIFIC EXAMPLES. THE US HAS SOUGHT TO ACCOMODATE THE EXPRESSED ASPRIATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE IV. WHILE THE CONCON ONLY DEALS WITH THE INTERNAL MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOR THE VI TO TELL US IF IT WANTS SOMETHING DIFFERENT; FOR INSTANCE THE LEGISLATURE COULD PETITION THE CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR. CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS USUALLY ARE TAKEN OF REFER TO INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT, SHE ADDED, NOT WHETHER PARTICULAR FEDERAL LAWS ARE APPLICABLE IN THE TERRITORY. IF THE CONCON EXCEEDS ITS AUTHORITY AND TALKS ABOUT OTHER THINGS, SO BE IT.

4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES ASSURED THE MISSION THAT DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS AWARE OF OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CHARTER AND EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION TO INVITE THE MISSION REFLECTED THE VIEW THAT WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE ABOUT OUR ADMINISTRATION OF THE VI. THE US, HE
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POINTED OUT, HAS DOMESTIC OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS ALL US CITIZENS WHICH DERIVE FROM THE NATURE OF THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM. HE SAID THAT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE IS CONCEIVABLE TO ANY CHANGE REQUESTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE VI, BUT THAT THERE IS NO INTEREST IN INDEPENDENCE THERE. BACHROUCH SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LIMITATION OF THE CONCON TO QUESTIONS OF INTERNAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI ARE PREVENTED FROM EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO RAISE QUESTIONS RELATED TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US.

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN SAID THE US POSITION ON SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE VI IS THAT WE WANT TO DO WHAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI WANT. TODMAN POINTED OUT THAT, IN DISCUSSING THE CONCON AND RELATIONS WITH THE US, TWO DIFFERENT ISSUES WERE INVOLVED. THE CONSTITUTIONS DEALS, WITH THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT, NOT RELATIONS WITH THE US, WHICH IS SOMETHING ELSE THAT COULD BE ADDRESSED IN A PLEBISCITE. IF THERE WERE ANY INTEREST IN INDEPENDENCE THE IDEA WOULD BE ENTERTAINED, BUT HE COULD NOT CONCEIVE THAT HIS FELLOW VIRGIN ISLANDERS WOULD SEEK INDEPENDENCE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM VUNIBOBO ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EVENTUAL ABSORPTION OF THE IB BY THE US, TODMAN SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION, THAT NO ONE LIVES IN ISOLATION, AND THAT HE HOPED THAT THOSE THINGS THAT ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE IV WILL BE PRESERVED.

5A. ACHIEVEMENT OF FULL SELF-GOVERNMENT

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM DIAKITE ABOUT POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE FUNCTION OF THE OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS, VAN CLEVE, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED DOTA'S "HOUSEKEEPING" ROLE, SAID THAT ANY TERRITORIAL COULD ACHIEVE A PUERTO RICO-TYPE
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(SELF-GOVERNING) STATUS IN WHICH CASE, DOTA WOULD NO LONGER BE INVOLVED IN ANY WAY. IN RESPONSE TO SEALY'S QUESTION ABOUT WHEN A FULL MEASURE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE VI WOULD

BE ACHIEVED AND WHAT WE CONSIDERED TO BE A FULL MEASURE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, MAYNES SAID THERE IS NO FIXED TIMETALBE AND WE HAVE NOT FORMULATED WHEN WE WOULD TAKE THE ISSUE TO THE GA, AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST.

6. ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

ALL OF THE MISSION MEMBERS RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE US IS DOING TO FURTHER THE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE TERRITORY. THE ISSUE WAS PUT IN ITS STARKEST TERMS BY VUNIBOBO WHO SAID A "DEPENDENCY SYNDROME" HAD DEVELOPED, TOO MUCH MONEY IS SPENT ("DOES THIS PUT FIBRE INTO PEOPLE?"), AND THE PEOPLE OF THE VI ARE TOO DEPENDENT ON US AID. SEALY SPECIFICALLY LINKED ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE.

7. DE LUGO POINTED OUT THAT THE ABSENCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE VI IMPEDES THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL RECENT EFFORTS AT ATTRACT LIGHT, NON-POLLUTING INDUSTRY TO THE VI. THE LACK OF ADEQUATE RAINFALL MAKES AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT VERY DIFFICULT AND TOURISM REMAINS A MAINSTAY OF THE ECONOMY. VAN CLEVE AND TODMAN ALSO CITED THE LACK OF NATURAL RESOURCES WHICH IMPEDE DEVELOPMENT. VAN CLEVE SAID IT IS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN USG POLICY TO FOSTER ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN EVERY US TERRITORY AND ADDED THAT ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL WOULD BE WELCOME. SHE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THE US IS NOT

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REPEAT NOT WILLING THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI NOT HAVE THOSE SERVICES WE BELIEVE ESSENTIAL TO PEOPLE LIVING UNDER THE AMERICAN FLAG, AND THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VI ARE ENTITLED TO THE BEST THE US CAN PROVIDE. (BOTH MAYNES AND TODMAN ECHOED THIS THOUGHT.) VAN CLEVE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE 1,010 DIFFERENT FEDERAL PROGRAMS APPLICABLE TO THE VI AND THAT ALL FEDERAL INCOME TAXES COLLECTED IN THE VI ARE RETURNED TO THE VI GOVERNMENT.

8. TIES WITH THE CARIBBEAN

THE MISSION ASKED REPEATEDLY IF THE VI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US INHIBITED TIES WITH ITS CARIBBEAN NEIGHBORS. DE LUGO SAID THAT THE VI IS US AND THE ECONOMY IS TIED TO THE US ECONOMY BUT THAT CULTURAL LINKS WITH THE CARIBBEAN ARE VERY EXTENSIVE. HE DID NOT SEE ANY OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL TIES, BUT THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT. VAN CLEVE
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SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO KNOW DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED LINKS BEFORE BEING ABLE TO GIVE AN AUTHORITATIVE ANSWER, BUT THAT WE WOULD NOT OPPOSE ANY MOVE TOWARD PRODUCTIVE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY. TODMAN SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY SOLICITED THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE VI AND PUERTO RICO ON US CARIBBEAN POLICY AND THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT BOTH THE VI AND PUERTO RICO SHARE IN THE FORMATION OF THAT POLICY SINCE IT WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT ON BOTH. HE DID NOT SEE THE VI-US RELATIONSHIP AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE VI PLAYING A MORE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ROLE IN THE CARIBBEAN IF THEY SO DESIRED, WHICH IS WHY HE SOLICITED THE VIEWS OF THE TWO GOVERNORS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY SEALY ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DEVOLUTION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS POWERS TO THE VI AS HAS OCCURRED IN UK TERRITORIES, MAYNES SAID THAT, WHILE THE US FAVORED GOOD TIES, ANY SUCH DECISION WOULD REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL AND IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO KNOW SPECIFICALLY WHAT WAS BEING PROPOSED.

9. IMMIGRATION

THE MISSION REFLECTED A NUMBER OF CONCERNS ABOUT IMMIGRATION:

- VI LACK OF CONTROL OVER IMMIGRATION POLICY
- FEARS OF NATIVE VIRGIN ISLANDERS THAT THEIR WAY OF LIFE IS THREATENED BY THE INFLUX OF "OUTSIDERS" AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF "NATURALIZED ALIENS" WHO MAY TIP THE BALANCE POLITICALLY

--ALLEGATIONS OF HARASSMENT OF BONDED WORKERS BY INS
--STRAINS ON VI RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL SERVICES CAUSED BY IMMIGRATION

10. DE LUGO SAID IMMIGRATION IS A DIFFICULT QUESTION;
THE FOUNDING FATHERS DIDN'T ENVISION NON-CONTIGUOUS TERRITORIES. HE DISCUSSED TWO RECENTLY INTRODUCED BILLS WHICH
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WOULD SET UP A COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS
IN OFF SHORE TERRITORIES AND A COMMISSION TO
REVIEW CASES OF BONDED WORKERS IN THE VI.

11. INS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SEALY SAID THE SUSPENSION OF
DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS AGAINST BONDED WORKERS WHOSE CONTRACTS HAD EXPIRED GAVE THEM A LEGAL MEANS TO STAY ON IN
THE VI. HE ALSO DISCUSSED THE LEGISLATION REFERRED TO
ABOVE INTRODUCED BY CONGRESSMAN EILBERG AND DE LUGO, AND
REVIEWED IN GENERAL TERMS THE PROBLEMS OF UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS IN THE US AND RECENT CHANGES IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE QUOTAS. HE AND OTHERS POINTED OUT THAT EVEN IF
THE ABOVE LEGISLATION IS ADOPTED, NO SPEEDY REMEDY TO VI IMMIGRATION PROBLEM IS IN SIGHT SINCE THE PROCEDURES WILL BE
SLOW. CHIEF JUDGE BOOKFORD POINTED OUT THAT NO NEW
BONDED WORKERS ARE BEING ADMITTED TO THE VI. HE ALSO DENIED ALLEGED HARASSMENT BY THE INS. LEARY SAID THAT THE
BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT OUR LAWS ARE NOT SO CONSTITUTED AS
TO GIVE ONE ENTITY (THE VI) CONTROL OVER ITS OWN IMMIGRATION POLICY. IN RESPONSE TO VUNIBOBO'S POINT THAT BRITISH
TERRITORIES HAVE INTERNAL CONTROL OVER IMMIGRATION, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER WACH SAID THAT THIS HAD BEEN TRIED
ONE YEAR AGO IN CALIFORNIA BUT HAD BEEN DECLARED ILLEGAL
BY THE SUPREME COURT WHICH RULED THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR
IMMIGRATION MATTERS RESTS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
LEARY POINTED OUT THAT INR HAS A DERIVATIVE ROLE AND
DOESN'T HAVE MUCH CONTROL OVER THE LAWS THAT ARE MADE.
HE ADDED THAT A MISSION FROM INS WOULD BE GOING DOWN TO
THE VI SOON AT CONGRESSMAN DE LUGO'S REQUEST.

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12. NATIONAL PARK

DIAKITE AND OTHERS RAISED THE QUESTION OF ALLEGED PRESSURE BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ON RESIDENTS OF ST. JOHN TO WELL ADDITIONAL LAND TO THE PARK. DE LUGO POINTED OUT THAT THE PARK HAS NO RIGHT OF EMINENT DOMAIN AND CANNOT FORCE ANY ONE TO SELL LAND. VAN CLEVE SAID THAT THE ST. JOHN PARK IS THE MOST VOLUNTARY PARK IN THE U.S. SYSTEM, HAS NO AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE LAND FROM ANYONE BUT A WILLING SELLER AND DOES NOT POSSESS A SQUARE INCH THAT HAS NOT BEEN VOLUNTARILY ACQUIRED.

13. EXPATRIATE LAND PURCHASES

VARIOUS MISSION MEMBERS EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE PURCHASES OF LAND IN THE VI BY "RICH" AMERICANS TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE LOCAL POPULATION. DE LUGO SAID THAT PRIVATE

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USE OF LAND IS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE AND THAT LAND USE IS CONTROLLED BY TAXATION AND ZONING. HE DENIED THAT THERE IS "HOSTILITY" TO "FOREIGNERS" WHO BUY UP LAND IN THE VI BUT SAID THERE IS UNDERSTANDABLE RESENTMENT TOWARDS RECENTLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANTS, MOSTLY FROM OTHER CARIBBEAN ISLANDS, WHO, HOWEVER, IN THE AMERICAN TRADITION WILL NOW BECOME FULL FLEDGED, PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE VI. TODMAN ALSO DENIED THE ALLEGATION.

14. OTHER

THE MISSION ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT BUREAUCRACY IS TOO LARGE, THAT THE COST OF LIVING
IN THE VI IS TOO HIGH, THAT THE MISSION WAS NOT ABLE
TO SPEND LONG ENOUGH IN THE VI TO UNDERSTAND ITS COMPLEX
PROBLEMS (SIC) AND THAT THE TIMING OF THE MISSION'S VISIT
DURING CARNAVAL WAS NOT PROPITIOUS.

15. THIS TELEGRAM HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED IN THE DEPARTMENT,
DOTA, INS OR WITH CONGRESSMAN DE LUGO.
LEONARD

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